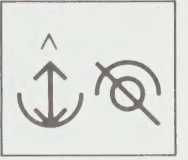


# COMMUNICATING TOGETHER



A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ABOUT AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2

JUNE 1988





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# SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES

CAROL LYNN

*Carol Lynn is a staff supervisor at Three Trilliums Community Place, a support service program for physically disabled adults. She has also been involved for the past year with the ESCI Susan Wilson Community Information Service (SWCIS). Ms. Lynn is a free lance writer and photographer and wrote the following account of the SWCIS project and the special young people involved in it.*

Although the December day was grey and bleak, without even a covering of snow on the ground to brighten it up, we were all fairly excited as we whisked by the town of Barrie in our little blue Chev. My friend Joseph and I in the front seat were busily calculating miles and arrival times. Sue and John were engrossed in a somewhat jovial conversation of their own in the back seat. I continually urged them to look around at the scenery, for who knew when we would pass this way again, but they said later, they had too many things to discuss right then.

Sue Odell and John Dowling are nonspeaking, physically disabled young adults and are augmentative communicators. Sue uses a Blissymbol board and John uses his voice, although he is fluent with Blissymbols, and has much knowledge of other augmentative communication systems.

Sue and John are part of a team of young presentors, and we were on our way to Parry Sound, Ontario, about 150 miles north of Toronto. They had been invited to speak to the Parry Sound Rotary Club and also to some elementary school classes.

In 1986, the Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI) received donations in memory of Susan Wilson, the late wife of the Chairman of the Board of Directors. The family asked that the funds be directed toward a project relating to augmentative communicators.

Shirley McNaughton, executive director of ESCI, decided to use the money to train young adult augmentative communicators to become

presentors and information providers in the community. And she knew just the four young people who would be perfect for the job. John Dowling had already been doing some work in this field, and he, Ann Running, and Kari Harrington had all been Shirley's students in school back in the early seventies. Sue had been a volunteer in Shirley's class at the time, and had taught herself Blissymbols.

## Training — the First Step

Shirley McNaughton had kept in touch with these four young people through the years. She had always seen a great potential in each of them, and as they grew into adulthood, they did not disappoint her. In March, 1987, the Susan Wilson Community Information Service was launched, and the four young people began a training session that lasted into June. Katy Mann, a special education teacher who had recently joined ESCI through a teacher loan arrangement with the Toronto Board of Education, was responsible for the overall formation of content for the program. Shirley McNaughton gave lectures relating to the many aspects of augmentative communication. I was hired as an attendant to

assist the four young people during the times they were assembled together for their classroom training.

The students were trained in preparing for presentations, problem solving during presentations, and using visual and audio-visual media. Lectures were given on the content of presentations, and even on body language and grooming in relation to presentations.

There were several guest speakers. Murray Spence, lecturer in special education at York University, made several appearances to convey much of his knowledge to the young trainees. Lang Moffat, a member of the Board of Directors of ESCI, and Cathy Fairley, a special education teacher, also gave of their expertise.

The funds received in honour of Susan Wilson were directed toward attendant care, transportation, promotional and instructional materials, and equipment such as an overhead projector.

Early in the program, it was decided that a video film would be useful to help orient audiences who were not familiar with augmentative communication. Many thanks must be given to the Pilot Club of North Toronto, who donated the funds to make this possible, and also to Janice Dawe and the crew



Breakthrough film crew plan a shot during the filming of *Speaking for Our Selves*.



of Breakthrough Films and Television Inc., who donated their time.

It was logical that the presentors should name their own film, and so after much exploring and experimenting with words, making lists, discarding, and re-arranging, the film became known as "Speaking for Our Selves" — which was exactly what the young people were about to start doing in September, 1987.

The filming did not go perfectly, of course. Does anything? One day, when the outside filming of Ann was almost finished, it started to rain and everyone headed for cover, Ann in her wheelchair, the cameramen hugging their heavy equipment and all moving as quickly as possible. Another day was so hot that everyone thought the camera crew or perhaps the cameras themselves would melt, to say nothing of the "performers".

We tried to shoot some still photos of the camera crew filming in the resource centre, and found to our dismay that the walls in the background were covered with such a profusion of information that we could barely distinguish who from what in the photos. But in the end, thanks to good planning, perseverance, and a professional film crew, we had a video that we were all proud of and which never fails to draw admiring remarks from anyone seeing it.

## Reaching the Community

On September 16, 1987, the first presentation was given to the Kiwanis Club of Toronto at the Royal York Hotel. The presentors work in pairs, and Kari and Ann were chosen for this first engagement. The thing I remember most is the hotel itself. Neither Kari, Ann, nor myself had ever been inside the Royal York Hotel before. I couldn't stop turning Ann's chair around and around, so she could see the red and gold walls from every angle, and none of us could help but be impressed with the forest of chandeliers. They were everywhere, hanging from the ceiling, clinging to the walls, reflecting from the mirrors. Everything seemed to shine and glitter.

The first presentation ran quite smoothly. There was an amusing incident later, when a member of the audience asked Ann a question

and her voice output communication aid malfunctioned and answered all by itself. Surprisingly, the answer it chose fit right in with the man's question, and the audience thought Ann was actually answering — until the answer was repeated too many times!

The next presentation was given by Kari and John to the Kitchener Rotary Club. All we really saw of Kitchener was the main street through the windows of the Freedom Machine Van as we rolled along toward the Valhalla Inn. Nancy McCartney, one of the ESCI consultants and I, hurried directly into the hotel with Kari and John and began setting up for the presentation, then had time for some tea in the cafeteria before the Rotarians began their meeting.

The presentation went very well. One high point for us was meeting Mr. Norman Riddiough, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Easter Seal Society of Ontario, and we were able to chat with him later and get some feedback on the presentation. After a quick meal in the hotel cafeteria, we were homeward bound.

The next invitation came from the Rotary Club in Parry Sound for December 8. Sue and John were the pair chosen to go on this trip, because they were able to use manual wheelchairs. Joseph and I were planning to drive them up in our car. The catch was that there was no room in our small car for the wheelchairs; they would be taken up separately by Shirley and Bob McNaughton in their station wagon. We would all meet at the hotel where we planned to spend the night, as Sue, John, and Shirley were going to be speaking to three classes in the public school the next morning.

Approaching our destination, we all decided we were too hungry to wait until we got right into the town of Parry Sound to eat, so we pulled off onto a service road in search of a restaurant. We discovered a rambling, ranch-style dining room that looked just right, but since we had no wheelchairs, Joseph and I had to carry Sue and John into the restaurant one at a time.

Sue could not balance without her wheelchair insert, but luckily we had a coil of rope in the car. Joseph, looking a bit like a rodeo

cowboy with a lasso, tied her securely to the chair, and then kicked the extra length of rope under the table. Throughout all this, customers in the restaurant hardly gave us a second glance, and the staff took our orders and served us as if all they had just witnessed was an every day occurrence, and we were just ordinary folk. We were already becoming impressed with Parry Sound!

We finally finished eating and were on our way again. Reaching the motel, we joined up with the wheelchairs, and drove with Shirley and Bob to the hospital where we were to do the presentation. We found the audience there extremely enthusiastic. They kept us so long overtime asking questions, we almost missed the last call for dinner at our motel dining room. One man informed us he would be at the school the next morning and sure enough, he was. He entered classrooms of five and six-year-olds and told them all about the great talk he had been privileged to hear the evening before, and which they were about to witness now.

The school was several blocks from our motel, and John, Sue, and I had decided our only chance to sightsee in Parry Sound would be to walk to the school in the morning.

When we awoke early, it was raining, but we were undaunted and still determined to walk. We were greeted outside the school by the principal and other representatives, who again acted as if it were an everyday occurrence to see green raincoats frolicking in the rain with wheelchairs covered in yellow plastic ponchos, and John wearing Shirley's hat because his poncho had no hood. The two classrooms of five and six-year-olds were quite interested, and the Grade Seven students were full of questions.

We left for home that afternoon feeling that we knew Parry Sound. We had walked her streets, seen her homes, entered her schools, met her people. We drove away feeling that we had given them something, and received much in return. We could only hope that future presentations would be as mutually rewarding as this trip had been.

## The Messages Conveyed

What do the presentors try to get



across to their audiences? What is it these young people are trying to impress upon those in the community?

Sue likes to stress that "Nonspeaking people are not different than you are. We have the same hopes, dreams, and feelings. We just require more time to communicate than you do." Sue also expresses much pride in the fact that she has a job, that disabled people can work, too.

Ann sometimes tells people how frustrating it can be when one cannot speak. In the video, Ann says "Thoughts go around inside of me all the time. I want people to understand my feelings. It is so frustrating when they cannot hear the real me."

Kari's poetry best expresses what she would like to say to people.

#### "Take Time"

Take the time to know me,  
take the time to listen to me,  
perhaps we can be friends.

John likes to use humour a lot in his presentations. He feels it sets up a relaxed atmosphere, and helps people to relate to one another more easily. His message comes through loud and clear — "We are not different. We are the same as you."

The invitations to speak continue to come. John, accompanied by Katy Mann, spoke to the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) hosted by York University on Saturday, February 27, 1988. They presented at a dialogue workshop with the theme "Know me to teach me". The audience consisted of student teachers who were seeking awareness of the needs of special children.

#### Be Prepared for the Unexpected

On Wednesday, March 9, 1988, Kari's dad drove her to the MacDonald Block in downtown Toronto to speak at a meeting of the Ontario Ministry of Education, Regional Offices Special Education Personnel. Kari and Shirley rehearsed the pre-programmed material in Kari's communication device before going in to the presentation. Everything was running smoothly. As we settled ourselves in the meeting room, all eyes fixed upon us expectantly; Shirley introduced Kari as I put the first overhead on. All of a sudden Kari's voice output communication

aid decided not to work. It went totally dead. Shirley saved the day by reading the overheads aloud. Kari was a bit disappointed, but she is used to her device "crashing" as she calls it. Kari has learned that things do not go as perfectly as planned all of the time. She even had a last word at home that night. "At least I had a woman's voice this time — Shirley's!"

The presentors encourage questions from the audience. Many of the questions are technical, centering around the operation of the different communication devices. Some are more personal. "What does it feel like to be disabled?" "How can you live in an apartment by yourself?"

These are the questions that are warmly welcomed and candidly answered, for these are the questions that spawn awareness. The answers to these questions are the channels through which the understanding will slowly but inevitably flow — "We are not different. We are the same as you."

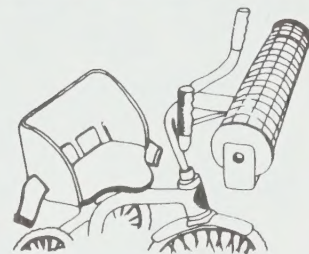
The invitations keep coming. There will be Halton, Oshawa, Sudbury. One tremendously exciting event on the horizon is the possibility of attending the ISAAC conference this October in Anaheim, California. Our young presentors are looking forward with anticipation to this dream which hopefully will become a reality.

As a community awareness project, the Susan Wilson program is bound to be a success. It has the expertise and dedication of many caring individuals behind it, not to mention the perseverance and abilities of the highly motivated presentors themselves.

This program has given jobs and provided a sense of dignity and confidence to the lives of four young people who certainly deserve it. Today our young presentors are building memories that will last a lifetime; not only for themselves, but for many of the lives they touch as they go out into the community and teach people that they can and are speaking for themselves.

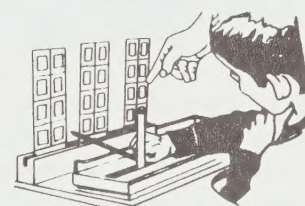
To the Wilson family, from all of us and from the entire community, all we can say is thank you from the depths of our hearts for making all this possible. □

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## Letting Them Know

KARI HARRINGTON



*Kari Harrington was in the original Blissymbol class of 1971 at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. Since then, she has completed elementary school at James Robinson Public School in Markham, Ontario. Presently, she is a senior student at Langstaff Secondary School in Richmond Hill, taking one credit subject as well as classes in the Orthopaedic Special Education Department.*

Twelve years ago I was in the hospital for a back operation and my mom had to do most of the talking for me. Everyone was really nice to me, but when it came to important questions that needed to be answered about my condition or anything, they didn't bother to ask me. They always asked my mom or dad. If something didn't seem quite right, it was, again, my mom or dad who had to ask the questions of the doctors or nurses.

On February 14th of this year, my left leg became swollen and painful. The doctor thought I had a thrombosis and recommended that my parents take me to Sunnybrook Medical Centre. We went right away.

**This section of  
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The nurses and doctors who examined me were great and talked directly to me. Initially Mom helped to tell what happened, just to make it quicker, but from then on I did most of my own talking. After x-rays and tests, they decided I did have a blood clot in my leg and told me I would have to stay in hospital for eight or ten days. Mom said this would be a great opportunity for me to show that I really could speak for myself.

### Ouch! Those Needles!

To treat the blood clot, I was given medicine intravenously. What a joy that was! I can't remember how many times they tried or how many different people tried to get the intravenous line in. Mom left after 10:00 p.m. and it still wasn't in, but at some point after that they managed to find a vein in poor old wiggly, the hand that I can't control very well.

All this time, I had been lying on a gurney — those things that are like stretchers on wheels. About 11:00 p.m., they put me in a regular bed. Boy was I glad. I was still in the Emergency Department though. The nurse asked if I had had my Dilantin and I said I had had one dose and I needed my second one. For some reason she gave me two capsules. I didn't know why, but I went along with it. I wasn't able to sleep and in the morning I was still hurting so they gave me pain killers.

I was put in my chair for breakfast. A different doctor came to see me now, Dr. Geerts. I answered all his questions and told him the whole story with my symbol board. He seemed relaxed and gave me all the time I needed to answer him the way I wanted to. Dr. Geerts explained about the Venogram they were going to take in the afternoon. This would prove whether or not I did have a clot and show where it was.

To do the Venogram, an intravenous needle had to be put in my swollen foot to inject dye which mixes with my blood. Again, they didn't have any luck getting the intravenous in. After three or four tries, they sent me back to Emergency. A special

nurse came and tried about three more times, but finally gave up. By this time, I was beginning to look like the Purple People Eater and everyone decided enough was enough, especially me! They did another test called Impedance Plethysmography. At least there were no needles. However, it didn't work because the spasms in my legs interfered with the readings.

At 7:00 p.m. I was moved to my room and the nurse brought me two more capsules to take. I wondered about it and decided they must be giving me my daily dose all at once. I began to feel a little spaced out and before I knew it, I was out like a light.

When Dr. Geerts came in the morning I told him about how I am used to taking my pills at home and he said he would investigate it. That was when I found out that I had been given 400 mg. of Dilantin a day instead of the 200 I was used to. No wonder I was so spaced out! My leg was bandaged up and elevated. Dr. Geerts said they were doing that to get the swelling down and that they would do the Venogram the next day. When I did have it, it wasn't too bad. It did show a blood clot in my leg, in fact many of them, from my knee to my groin.

One night nurse was particularly nice. She and I chatted with my Blissboard for a while. She noticed my grungy hair and said she would wash it if she had time. Sure enough she did and it felt so good. All the nurses took time to see what I wanted to say and when I was restless with the pain in my leg, they got something to help me.

### Visitors Help a Lot

I had lots of visitors who helped to keep me cheerful. One of them was Kevin. He has C.P. too, but his speech is better than mine and he doesn't need to use augmentative communication. Caroline, a patient across from me, is just my age. She said she had seen people like Kevin and I, but had never really thought of them having the same thoughts and ideas as she did until she heard us talking together. Another bit of



promotion for community awareness!

It was during the time another visitor was there that I felt something running up my arm. I thought my intravenous might be coming out. I told the nurse and sure enough, it was.

The McNaughtons visited too. Shirley McNaughton and Sue Odell, another friend, both have had blood clots at one time or another. We're forming a club for people who have had a thrombosis. Instead of 'Zombies', we'll be the 'Thrombies'.

Saturday, the intravenous was removed. Dr. Geerts said I might go home on Sunday but it turned out to be Monday instead.

I thought over and over again about the film "Speaking for Our Selves" and I thought "it's too bad my part in the film wasn't taped when I was in hospital." In situations like this, it's really important that you be able to speak for yourself. I found out that I could.

I guess the message I'm trying to get across is that there won't always be somebody around to speak for us and we have to take very opportunity to "speak" and stick up for ourselves.□

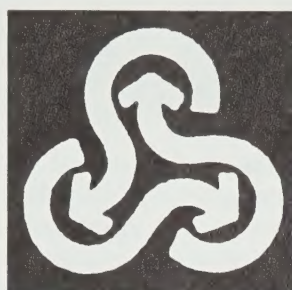
### Blissymbol Materials Available in Spanish

Pilar Such Acin reported at the European Blissymbol Affiliate Meeting that many of the Blissymbol materials have been translated into Spanish and are now available. These include:

Blissymbol stamps  
*A Guide for Using  
Blissymbol Stamps*  
Blissymbol Flashcards  
*Blissymbols for Use and  
Supplement  
Teaching and Using Blissymbols*

Anyone interested in purchasing these materials in Spanish should contact:

Pilar Such Acin  
ASPACE  
Apartado 55  
20.080 San Sebastian  
Spain



# ANIMATIONS OF THE MIND

The Biennial Conference of the International Society for Alternative and Augmentative Communication (ISAAC) will be held at the Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, California on October 23-26, 1988. The conference features national and international speakers on a broad range of topics, including the application of the latest technology for the nonspeaking person, teaching interaction strategies, using augmentative systems for employment settings, and consumer-user presentations. The conference will also offer numerous opportunities for researchers, clinicians, system users, and educators to meet at informal round table discussions and to visit the state-of-the-art exhibits. The ambience of the Disneyland Hotel and all of sunny Southern California will contribute to make the ISAAC Conference, "Animations of the Mind", an exciting personal and professional experience.

For information or registration materials, contact Frank DeRuyter, Ph.D., 1988 Conference Program Chair, Communication Disorders Department, Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center, 7601 East Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242.

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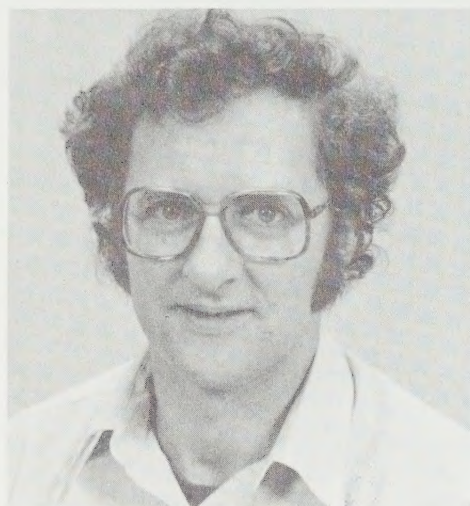
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## Strategies for Participation

GEB VERBURG



"Research and Publications" is written by Geb Verburg, who has been involved in the field of nonspeech communication since the mid-seventies. A cognitive scientist, Mr. Verburg is currently working as a research associate in several projects at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre, Toronto.

As a researcher in a paediatric rehabilitation hospital, I, like many other researchers, occupy a no-mans-land that lies between the provision and the purchase or acceptance of services. I neither give direct service nor do I receive service directly but I interact closely with clinicians, teachers, engineers, and technologists. I also meet often with the parents and children who use devices. From this vantage point, I have observed with awe and fascination how parents and young adults find their way through the service maze, and I have heard versions of both sides of the parent-professional and child-professional dyad. I have written about these topics before and needed only a slight nudge to do so again. The reason for again tackling the topic of this relationship is that a book and an article appeared recently aimed at helping parents deal with professionals.

The book is *Strategies: A Practical Guide for Dealing with Professionals and Human Service Systems* by Craig V. Shields. The article entitled

"How to be an assertive parent in the treatment team" is written by Dr. A. Mervyn Fox and appeared in a newsletter called *Participating Families*. First let me give a quick plug for the newsletter. This newsletter is like a Mercedes or a Lincoln Continental on a highway full of battered Fords and Volkswagens. Its ten or twelve pages are printed on parchment-like paper, its lay-out is very professional and its contents match the external cachet of the newsletter. I am very impressed with *Participating Families*, with the high quality of its content, the information it provides, and the initiatives such as conferences and workshops which are taken by the parents who are participating families.

The book and the article are very similar and very different too. The similarity lies in the fact that both authors offer strategies for parents. Fox offers twelve steps or strategies for parents to become more effective partners in the treatment team. Shields presents sixty-nine strategies for dealing with professionals and the system. Each of Shields's strategies is highlighted with examples, anecdotes and explanations.

The difference between the two sources springs from the tenor or tone of the documents which is best illustrated by the first strategies.

Fox's first strategy reads:

"Remember what you have that the professionals lack — a total commitment to the child and to your whole family, allied to uniquely complete knowledge of the child, and the responsibility of making decisions and choices in regard to every aspect of your child's management."

Shields starts his strategies thus:

"Remember that a professional is someone who has chosen to provide services of a particular nature in exchange for payment. If this exchange is to be truly useful, the professional needs to be a resource to you, your child, and family."

The difference in tone between the two authors is obvious. Fox writes from the perspective of a team member, while Shields is uncompromisingly candid or critical.

## Strategies

Trained at the University of California and at UCLA as a social anthropologist, Craig Shields taught at the University of Lethbridge and was a Senior Policy Advisor with the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. The book's back cover tells us further that the strategies contained in Shields's book "were developed primarily during six years as executive director of a multi-disciplinary treatment centre for children with emotional, developmental and learning difficulties".

The 144 page paperback is organized in seven chapters. The titles of the chapters include: Developing the Right Attitude, Understanding Professionals, Knowing The System, How to Begin, How to Select Professionals or Agencies, How to Deal with Professionals. In addition, the book repeats the strategies and provides listings of parent support organizations in Canada and the United States.

Each chapter is divided into subsections which set the context for one or more strategies and explain or illustrate the strategy. The book, though, is more than the sixty-nine strategies and you will enjoy and learn from the stories, the keen observations and insights presented. I have selected a few shorter strategies to mention here.

- Accentuate the positive and keep the negative in perspective.
- Never relinquish responsibility for your child or for looking after your child's best interest.

Several strategies address problems that can be attributed to professionals, such as the use of jargon, delaying or avoiding a meeting or decision, bluffing, verbal attacks by professionals, out-talking and pulling rank.

My favourite strategy from the chapter "Knowing The System" is the one which says that you are your own best advocate. In order to look after your own interests be well-informed, stay involved and participate.

From the chapter "How to Begin" I have selected two strategies. Seek out and explore the support groups



and publications related to your child's needs and keep a record of all contacts with professionals or agencies. Include the date and type of contact, the person's name and title, and a summary of the important points discussed.

In the chapter on dealing with professionals, six strategies address preparations for meetings such as making lists of points, making notes, establishing broad agreement about the purpose of the meeting and summarizing the results of a meeting. Commitments made by professionals should have a deadline and a person responsible for carrying out the commitment. The last strategy deals with an impasse.

"In general, when faced with an impasse:

- Keep the focus on the child's best interest
- Emphasize what's right rather than who's right
- Begin with areas of agreement among participants and work from there."

The strategies are relevant, to the point and can make the difference between a successful trip to a clinic or appointment and one from which you return feeling frustrated or abandoned.

### Professionals Painted Black

One unfortunate drawback in Craig Shields's book is that professionals are painted very black. They are described as persons who consider themselves to be *experts* rather than resources to the persons who seek their services. Professionals are said to be overloaded with information and starved for information, and use tactics such as avoiding and delaying. We learn that professionals can be inconsistent and that "the system" depersonalizes. Most professionals will admit to having observed instances of this or they may even admit to having committed some of these tactics under pressure of time and caseload. But it is certainly not the case that professionals in health-care, in psycho-social services or in augmentative communication are a collection of bungling, ignorant and insensitive individuals. I would maintain quite the opposite; that professionals are well informed, committed, dedicated, sensitive and highly motivated to help the child and I be-

lieve also to work with the parents.

Not until page 104, the second to the last text page of the book, did I find an acknowledgement of the positive role that a professional plays. In spite of this undervaluation of the professional, that ogre of the system, I find the book extremely useful. As long as one keeps in mind that neither the professionals nor the system are out to thwart you and your objective for your child, the strategies can help parents to be involved and to gain much more control over what happens to them in "the system".

### Partners in the Team

Although Fox presents only twelve strategies, they are packed with recommendations and advice. Again I have made some selections.

- Remember that most conflict stems from failure to communicate; aggression is an expression of poor communication, assertiveness a means of effective communication in itself.

- Be clear in your mind what you want professional interventions to achieve for your child; ask directly if your objectives and those of the team or medical professional are the same. If not, be sure you have come to a negotiated position in regard to what is happening: why, for how long, how the intervention will be evaluated, and what will happen next if the intervention is an experiment — it has never been tried before on your child. Bargain — I'll do it your way if.... Never lose sight of the objective — short term... or long term... .

- There is no need to feel intimidated. Do not avoid talking about feelings. If you feel a second opinion would help, never hesitate to ask for one.

- Assertiveness yields mutual respect and often friendship; your objectives will only be achieved if you say what they are. Professionals are well-informed, hard-working, and highly motivated — and respond best to similarly endowed parents as their partners.

- And the greatest of these is trust. Balance your assertiveness with trust.

I do recommend that you obtain a copy of the article — and the newsletter — in order to read the whole rather than the selections presented here. I realize that follow-

ing or adopting these strategies may not be easy. I have seen parents who applied the strategies and it works. The children and parents benefit and the system and its professionals can become more effective.

### One More Set of Strategies

In light of general socio-economic developments one could look at the almost simultaneous appearance of Shields's book, the establishment of the Participating Families newsletter and Fox's article as the coming-of-age of a particular market "niche" namely that of the consumers of health care services, including augmentative communication and rehabilitation services, who are taking more control of the services and products offered to them. And to that I say: "It's about time!" or "By all means!" or "Go for it!"

And that would be a fine ending for this column were it not that I have two concerns. I will mention them and leave them to be thrashed out in a later column.

Concern number one: Are the professionals ready? I think so, but I believe that there will have to be some learning and accommodation here and there. Parents can help in this mutual learning process.

Concern number two: I see the increased role of parents as a part of the concept of the health-care-without-walls movement. Governments appear to be very much in favour of community based service and resources. Yet, I do not see enough initiatives on the part of the system and the professionals to make this concept a reality.

Both of these concerns require a set of strategies of their own. Those discussed here will help create the atmosphere for this complementary set of strategies, policies, and creative alternatives. □

### References

Shields, Craig V. 1987 *Strategies: A practical guide for dealing with professionals and human service systems*. Richmond Hill: Human Services Press. P.O. Box 421, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada L4C 4Y8.

Fox, A. Mervyn 1987 "How to be an assertive parent in the treatment team." *Participating Families*, Vol. 1 (2) p.2-5. 1020 Lawrence Avenue W., Suite 303, Toronto, Ontario M6A 1C8.



## A Blissful Gathering in Milan

SHIRLEY McNAUGHTON

*Shirley McNaughton is the executive director of the Easter Seal Communication Institute. In March, 1988 she attended the European Blissymbol Affiliate Meeting in Milan, Italy as one of the three Canadian representatives.*

Give forty professionals, from four-teen different countries and representing twelve language backgrounds, the opportunity to meet for three days — to talk about Blissymbols — and you have an exciting gathering! The European Blissymbol Affiliate Meeting, held March 25-27 in Milan, Italy was just that. Those present had associations with Blissymbolics that went back to 1974, when the first visitors from the UK came to see the Canadian program started in Toronto in 1971.

Each person present had a strong commitment to the use of Blissymbols in their respective countries and many had been personally involved in the introduction of Blissymbols to their colleagues and in the translation of publications and communication materials to their native languages.

It was like a family get-together — with the experienced members offering their insights to the "babies", who were just beginning to work with Blissymbolics, and the "babies" providing inspiration and vitality to those with fully developed programs and their accompanying challenges.

### Reports Start the Meeting

The first day began with reports from each country. In turn, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, Spain, Southern Italy, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Northern Italy, Yugoslavia, Belgium, West Germany, United Kingdom, France, and Canada told of the programs and projects in their countries. Training approaches, new teaching materials, innovative Blissymbol applications, computer pro-

grams and videos were discussed and demonstrated. Interesting statistics about numbers of professionals trained and numbers of students using Blissymbols were also shared with the group. We welcomed the participation of Yugoslavia for the first time and enjoyed watching the skill of a full-time interpreter, both during the full meetings and during our discussions relating to affiliate and translation agreements.

Space allows mention of but a few of the highlights from the many reports that were given. Hungary reported that three to five training courses are conducted each year. Many of the Blissymbol teaching materials have been translated into Hungarian. Flashcards and sample worksheets were displayed along with many classroom wall illustrations.

France reported that as well as conducting three Blissymbol Elementary Training sessions each year, two courses have been held relating to the Talking Blissapple. The Resource Centre at Saran has received inquiries from many French speaking countries — including some from Africa. French speaking professionals from Belgium made two presentations and shared their programs, their newly

developed stamps and large-sized templates, and their videotapes. Of special interest was the report by a Belgian speech pathologist who is using Blissymbols to facilitate oral language when language development is delayed and who works with students experiencing difficulty in written language. She uses Blissymbols to help clarify concepts and to assist in the structuring of their written work.

The Scandinavian countries continue to work on Blissymbol computer programs and other materials. Sweden has completed a translation of the Talking Blissapple into Swedish, and Denmark has developed a new program for the Commodore Amiga in Danish. The Nordic group continues to meet on a regular basis. The last Nordic Blissymbol meeting was held in Oslo, Norway in October 1987.

Many activities were reported by Judy Seligman-Wine, on behalf of the Society for the Development of Blissymbolics in Israel. A major project undertaken by the Society was the production of a video demonstrating the use of Blissymbolics. It focuses on a ten-year-old boy who lives on a kibbutz and attends a school for cerebral palsied children. The film shows him using Blissymbols at home, at school and



A time for work.



in various settings in his community.

Spain announced their willingness to distribute Spanish Blissymbol stamps and materials, internationally. West Germany reported on the high demand for training programs and the strong interest in Blissymbols. Saudi Arabia presented aspirations for their young Blissymbol program, supported in its beginnings by professionals from Norway and Sweden.

The challenges of establishing new Blissymbol programs, of integrating Blissymbol communication within augmentative communication systems, and of providing communication opportunities were expressed many times. All participants had given many hours of personal time to establish Blissymbol programs in their countries and each had witnessed changes to countless numbers of lives, as individuals gained the ability to communicate and develop. The opportunity given to professionals working with nonspeaking children was very sensitively presented by Pina Genaro from Catania, Sicily. The satisfaction that comes from major accomplishment was reflected in every presentation.

### Developing the System

Next on the agenda came the system of Blissymbolics. Now the intense discussion began. First, Claudia Wood, System Coordinator for Blissymbolics Communication International presented the work

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she had been focusing upon for the past year. New symbols, system issues, and areas for future attention were outlined, then small groups were formed for discussion on specific topics.

One group expanded the Blissymbols that were needed for vocational settings. Are Blissymbols needed for all the vocabulary that might be necessary in a workshop setting such as pliers, drill press, wood lathe or chisel, or would pictures or drawings be a more satisfactory way to present such items?

Another group dealt with vocabulary that would be useful for discussing sex and reproduction and abstract concepts such as depression, rejection, elation and (to) perceive. Symbols for recreation, leisure and life skills were also considered. There is a need by some Blissymbol users to be able to talk about insurance, disability allowance and credit cards. This intense Blissymbol work continued until after eight p.m., when everyone agreed that it was time at last for dinner!

Day Two provided opportunities for further reports, "Show and Tell" technology update and dis-

cussion regarding training. We saw several videotapes and heard two guest speakers. A young Italian Blissymbol user presented flowers and a gift to me as the BCI representative and I in turn gave a plaque commemorating the occasion to Aurelia Rivarola, the able organizer of the Milan meeting. Ena Davies from the United Kingdom summarized and led the planning for future meetings.

### Mixing Work and Sightseeing

Symbol work, however, had just begun: on Sunday we were invited to Aurelia Rivarola's country home to continue our group discussions. Sunday afternoon found us gazing over hills and valleys north of Milan, enjoying a picnic feast, sitting in the warm sunshine — creating and refining Blissymbols. When the late afternoon temperature began to drop, we moved inside and continued working until nearly eight o'clock. Then back to Milan and more symbol talk over dinner.

Monday morning provided the last concentrated work on Blissymbols and the setting aptly demonstrated our resolve to give Claudia Wood as many ideas as our energy allowed. We gathered in the back of the sightseeing bus en route to Bergamo with Claudia presenting one issue after another, listening patiently to our responses, then taking a vote. The hour-and-a-half flew by, and no one noticed congested traffic — or beautiful scenery.

With only a few participants still left in Milan, the symbol talk decreased at dinner Monday evening — but not before giving Claudia several new symbol suggestions to consider.

The meeting in Milan was a huge success. Everyone who attended gained much, through the support and enthusiasm of those present. The system of Blissymbolics continues to benefit tremendously from the many different language and experience backgrounds of this multinational group of very dedicated professionals.

The next European meeting is scheduled for Belgium in 1989. I can hardly wait. □



And a time for play.



## System Development News

On page 16 of this issue, you will find the fascinating story of Yan Sheinfeld of Israel who used Blissymbols when studying for his Bar Mitzvah last year. Because of Yan's story, it seemed like an appropriate time to share with readers some of the symbols relating to Judaism that were requested some years ago by our affiliate in Israel. The Society for the Development of Blissymbols collected the vocabulary items needed in Hebrew, and submitted Blissymbol suggestions to the Symbol Office at BCI. Here the suggestions were studied and reviewed, and in 1982 were approved for addition to the Standard Blissymbol Vocabulary. These symbols have not been widely distributed as many of the words relate to life and activities in Israel. Some, however, relate to the Jewish religion and may be of interest to readers in many countries. A few examples are shown below.

### Hebrew Symbols Added to the Standard Blissymbol Vocabulary

Some of the new symbols are simple pictographs, and represent basic concepts in the Jewish faith. These are often used in the composition of more complex compound symbols.

#### Jewish



pictograph

This symbol is a pictograph of the Star of David, recognized internationally as a symbol for Judaism. It was used by Mr. Bliss in *Semantography* to represent Jewish.

#### yarmulke



hat + Jewish

A yarmulke is the religious head-covering worn by Jewish men.

#### prayer shawl, Tallit



cloth +  
prayer +  
Jewish

A prayer shawl is worn over the head and shoulders by Jewish men during religious services.

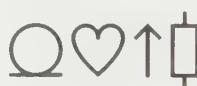
#### megillah



pictograph

This is a pictograph of a scroll. In the Jewish religion, there are five megillot, each read on a different holiday.

#### Purim



holiday +  
megillah

The most famous of the five megillot is the story of Queen Esther and is read on the holiday Purim.

#### Torah



pictograph

The Torah is a large scroll or holy book consisting of five books in which are written the teachings from God as handed down to Moses.

#### Simchat Torah



holiday +  
Torah

In the Jewish religion, a portion of the Torah is read each week. Simchat Torah is a holiday rejoicing in the reading of the final portion of the Torah. After this the readings start once again at the beginning.

#### mezuzah



part of +  
Torah + door

At the door of many Jewish homes hangs a small box called the mezuzah (meaning doorpost) which holds a bit of parchment with fifteen verses of scripture from the Torah.

#### commandments



pictograph

This symbol is a pictograph representing the two tablets on which were written the ten commandments. God passed these to his people through Moses.

#### synagogue



house +  
commandments

This is the building for Jewish religious services and instruction.

#### Shavuot



day +  
commandments

Shavuot is a holiday celebrating the receiving of the ten commandments.



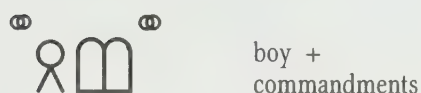
## Yan's Bar Mitzvah Blissymbols

Yan found there were many ideas he needed to express in the course of his studies for becoming Bar Mitzvah for which there were no existing Blissymbols. He used the *combine* strategy to develop symbols expressing his portrayal of a concept. As you can see from the examples given, some are words that have to do with the rituals and

objects in the Hebrew religion; others are abstract feelings and concepts that he needed to use in discussions with his rabbi. By using *combine indicators* around the symbols, much like one would use quotation marks, Yan tells us that these are his unique creations. Other people may have different interpretations of the same concepts

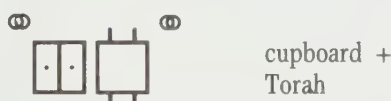
based on their own understanding of the meaning of the word. Look at Yan's symbols, then try to create other combined symbols for these concepts. Send your suggestions to the Symbol System Coordinator at BCI. She keeps all suggestions for future development of the Blissymbol System.

### Bar Mitzvah

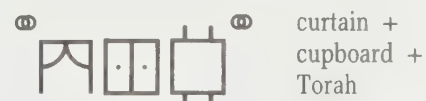


When Yan became Bar Mitzvah, he became a full member of the congregation with a man's religious duties to obey the commandments of God.

### Holy Ark



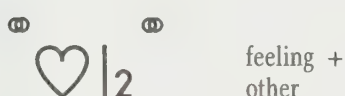
### Curtain of the Holy Ark



### scribe



### compassion



### responsibility



**Blissymbolics** is a meaning-based, augmentative communication system that stimulates both communicative and cognitive development. It can be used by persons of many ages and cognitive levels, offering a large vocabulary and opportunities to apply features of the system as communication strategies. Blissymbolics can be used independently, with a variety of picture systems and technologies, as a complement to words and spelling and as a bridge to reading.

Blissymbols used herein are derived from the symbols described in the work *Semantography*, original copyright © C.K. Bliss, 1949.

September 1982, C.K. Bliss granted an exclusive, non-cancellable and perpetual, world-wide license to the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, to provide standards for the application of Blissymbols, for use by handicapped persons and persons having communication, language and learning difficulties. In 1987, the Institute was renamed Blissymbolics Communication International and became a division of the Easter Seal Communication Institute.

The symbol composition and drawings appearing in articles are in accordance with *Blissymbols for Use*, compiled and edited by Barbara Hehner, and published by the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, Toronto, 1980.



CATHY FAIRLEY

*The Paraphrase is written for those who are moving into traditional orthography. It offers an independent reading opportunity for the growing reader. The Paraphrase is written by Cathy Fairley, former consultant, Easter Seal Communication Institute.*

## Wilderness Adventure Part II

Andrew Murphy lives in Clearwater, Florida. He communicates by eye-pointing to a wordboard. Last summer he took a camping trip to Northern Ontario. The first part of his story was in the last issue. Here is the second part of the story about his trip.

\* \* \* \*

We drove ten hours to a park in Ontario. On the way we talked and talked. Now I had three people I could talk to.

Susan wrote down what I said. That night she read it to the group. We had our first camping dinner — rice and water! I didn't like the food at all!

The next day we started out. There were five canoes. I sat in the middle. There was a dam ahead. We had to portage. We did it a lot. Two people carried me. One person carried my wheelchair.

I felt I was a lot of trouble. I told Susan. She told the group how I felt. Nobody minded. They said I made people happy.

I wanted to be a help. I had an idea. I looked at the map. I learned how to read a map in the canoe. I became the group's navigator.

It was the last night. I thanked everyone for being so good to me. We ate real food the next day. Then we said goodbye.

I felt happy. I had made new friends on my own. My mom hadn't helped me. I was sad to leave. But the trip had been great!

## To Readers of Paraphrase

The first part of Andrew's story appeared in the last issue of *Communicating Together* Vol. 6, No. 1, March 1988. □



Andrew navigates in the canoe.



## A Job for Joe

JOE CALDERONE



*Joe Calderone is a twenty-year-old young man with cerebral palsy and a significant learning disability who participates in the vocational training program at Meeting Street School, Easter Seal Society of Rhode Island. One component of Joe's education is learning to use computers for potential access to productive or supported employment. Joe writes this article about his job of typing lunch menus at his school.*

My name is Joe Calderone and I use a different kind of computer program than most people. I have a learning disability that prohibits me from reading. My computer program allows me to read easier and it's easier for me to be set up in front of a computer to do my work.

The program I use talks through a voice synthesizer. Unlike you or anybody else that can read, I just can't read, but I can make my computer program read for me as I type words into the computer. When I do my work, I use a pencil to press the computer keys because I have limited use of my hands. The work that I do is typing lunch menus for my school. After I type them, they are proofread by a school secretary and then I correct them. The menus are photocopied and then I deliver them to all the students in the school. If you don't have patience with the computer you're not going

to accomplish much. It takes me time to set up the computer and to do my work the way it should be. But two of the problems I used to have with the computer were typing rate and spelling. Since I got this new program it's made the job a lot more enjoyable and a lot easier because of the voice output. Now I enjoy the computer because it's not as frustrating as it used to be.

### About Joe's Equipment

Joe's job, of typing the menus, was designed as a data entry job in which Joe used the computer to fill in a menu form with the names of specific entrees, vegetables, desserts etc. It was decided that a computer with adaptations could enable Joe to do this job despite his being a nonreader (he can identify and copy letters but cannot read words).

Joe's setup includes an Apple IIe computer with Echo voice synthesizer, an Adaptive Firmware Card and a printer. Since he cannot isolate fingers to use the keyboard efficiently, Joe uses a pencil to press the keys. The software is *Talking Text Writer* (Scholastic Software). *Talking Text Writer* provides voice output and basic word processing functions with flexibility to provide the feedback individual users need. Joe is able to hear each letter as he enters it and then each word as he presses the space bar. Additionally, since Joe has difficulty placing the cursor on the correct line of the menu form, he can instruct the computer to read him the words on the cursor's line. *Talking Text Writer* also allows one to use eighty, forty and twenty column screens and to vary the letter and background colours on twenty column screens. Unfortunately, *Talking Text Writer* requires two-key commands. However, Joe sets the Adaptive Firmware Card to the Assisted Keyboard setting which creates locking "control", "shift" and "apple" keys.

Joe is pleased he is able to complete this job successfully. Besides demonstrating the computer skills which are required, Joe exhibits the good problem-solving, initiation and

job responsibility that will be required in any future supported work placement.

Shortly after Joe wrote this article, his work was completed and the school cook was made responsible for integrating the preparation of the menu with ordering, costing and inventory of the foods and kitchen supplies. However the training remains a positive experience for Joe; one which demonstrated to Joe and to others that he can successfully complete real, productive jobs despite his severe physical and learning impairments. It is hoped that another job similar to this one can be found for Joe within his school environment. □

### About the Publisher

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI), formerly the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, established in 1975, has worked since its inception toward enhancing the lives of nonspeaking people. In its early years the Institute's primary focus was the development and application of Blissymbolics as an augmentative communication system around the world. This role continues through Blissymbolics Communication International, a division of ESCI, but within a broader mandate that reflects the philosophy and perspective of its professional staff.

ESCI supports effective communication by nonspeaking people through:

- (1) advancing augmentative communication techniques and strategies that contribute to cognitive, social and emotional growth;
- (2) drawing attention to the quality of the learning experience and identifying those types of augmentative communication instruction that contribute to cognitive, social and emotional growth;
- (3) educating, informing and influencing those who are in a position to make positive life changes for nonspeaking people.



## A Blissymbol Bar Mitzvah

JUDY SELIGMAN-WINE

*Judy Seligman-Wine, a speech pathologist, was a member of the original team at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre which adapted Blissymbols for use by nonspeaking populations. In 1974 she emigrated to Israel where she teaches Blissymbol workshops and has set up Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) programs throughout the country. She is a member of the International Blissymbol Panel, chairperson of the Society for the Development of Blissymbolics in Israel and Chairperson of the ISAAC Standing Committee on Developing Countries.*

On August 13, 1987, Yan Sheinfeld was Bar Mitzvah, which in the Jewish religion signifies the act of taking on the responsibilities of an adult within the religious community. Yan took an active part in the Bar Mitzvah service — he chanted many of the prayers and the weekly Bible portion. He made a speech in which he welcomed all his guests and gave a short commentary relating to the content of his weekly Bible portion. He also said several words in Russian to Israel Shapiro in Leningrad, Russia. Israel was the boy with whom Yan was "twinning" and for whom Yan spiritually performed the act of being Bar Mitzvah. What made Yan's Bar Mitzvah so special was the fact that Yan has cerebral palsy and is nonspeaking. He communicates using Blissymbols and some written words. Yan was able to participate actively in his Bar Mitzvah service through the use of a small portable computer which was programmed with speech output. With this computer Yan chanted, prayed, sang and spoke to all his guests.

Yan's "Bar Mitzvah project" came about as the result of international cooperation. Dr. John Eulenberg, Director of the Artificial Language Laboratory at Michigan State University, East Lansing, U.S.A., had worked on a similar project for another child with cerebral palsy in

the United States. Dr. Eulenberg is an active member of ISAAC, the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Through ISAAC activities he and I have worked cooperatively in the past and decided to work together on his project. The project, while fulfilling a very important function within the life of one individual, was conceived as a vehicle which would allow for the development of good quality Hebrew synthesized speech which could meet the communication needs of many nonspeaking persons in Israel.

### Building a Bar Mitzvah Vocabulary

Yan Sheinfeld has been communicating with Blissymbolics since the age of five. After consulting with many people in Israel, we identified Yan as being the child most appropriate for this project. He was almost thirteen years old, he was personable, bright, and cooperative with a strong drive to work and to achieve, and he had the strong support of an understanding and loving family which could be counted on throughout the project. Yan, who does not have functional use of his hands, used a head switch to access a single-switch writing program for the Apple computer. With this program, he was able to copy letter by letter all the prayers out of the prayer book as well as the weekly Bible portion. They were stored in the computer

and used as the basis for his output at the time of the Bar Mitzvah. Just like any other child, Yan began to work with his Rabbi (Jewish religious leader) who gave Yan lessons as preparation for his Bar Mitzvah. Because of the need to be able to engage in a dialogue with Yan and to have feedback as to how much he was learning and understanding, Blissymbols were developed which expressed the various concepts Yan was learning. Thus began the procedure in which the Rabbi would teach Yan a number of concepts at their weekly sessions, Yan would bring the list of these concepts to me and together he and I would create Blissymbols to convey the meaning of these concepts. The development of these Blissymbols proved to be both challenging and a lot of fun. (Some of the Blissymbols created for the Bar Mitzvah are included in the "Blissymbol Talk" section, page 13).

John Eulenberg came to Israel for ten days in March, 1987 to meet and get to know Yan and to determine the type of software needed to enable Yan to operate the computer independently. During these ten days everyone involved in the project, including Yan himself, worked very hard, often ten to fifteen hours a day. It was decided that Yan would access the computer using two switches. One would be activated by an infra-red light and measure the distance between Yan's eye movements and the location on which they were focused on the screen. Yan would operate the other with a sideways movement of his head. After Dr. Eulenberg's visit, Yan continued to study in preparation for his Bar Mitzvah. In addition, he spent several hours each day typing into the computer the prayers, blessings and weekly passage. A large network of professionals and volunteers was involved with Yan during all these work sessions.

In July, Dr. Eulenberg arrived back in Israel, together with two assistants (one of whom was his son) to work with Yan for a month prior to the Bar Mitzvah itself. During this month he also worked on the synthesized speech, improving



Yan Sheinfeld at his Bar Mitzvah.



the quality in Hebrew and programming it into the chanted form. The final program used a portable laptop Toshiba computer which contained, in letter-labelled files, all the blessings, prayers and passages which Yan would recite at the Bar Mitzvah. These were all programmed with the appropriate incantation and intonation patterns. At the Bar Mitzvah itself, Yan could access a small portable screen and indicate which file he wanted by looking at the appropriate letter. The infra-red switch would register this information and call up the desired file. Once the file appeared on the screen before him, Yan could activate the voice output by using his head switch.

### And Finally — Bar Mitzvah Day

And thus the day of Yan's Bar Mitzvah arrived. It was a very hot

summer day; the synagogue was packed to overflowing. Additional lights were used by the television crew who reported on the Bar Mitzvah for the media and the lights continually overloaded the circuits, shutting off the air conditioning system. In spite of all the difficulties, there was an air of excitement and anxious anticipation on the part of the congregation and a feeling of panic on the part of all those who had worked so hard with Yan over the past six months. The calmest person of all seemed to be Yan himself; everyone was amazed at his confidence both in the system and in himself. The Rabbi opened the service, and at the appropriate time Yan operated the computer and the sound of the opening prayer being recited with the aid of the computer resounded throughout the sanctuary. It was a moving moment for all, and the excitement

and tension did not lessen as Yan recited the prayers, blessings and Bible reading, said his speech and commentary on the Bible portion, spoke to Israel Shapiro in Russian and closed the service with the singing of the closing prayer. What was once just a dream really took place — Yan became Bar Mitzvah and was proudly able to take his place within the Jewish community. And a giant step forward was taken in providing nonspeakers in Israel with the ability to take their place within the communicating community.

Special thanks must be given to Dr. John Eulenberg for his untiring and devoted professional efforts on behalf of nonspeakers in Israel. Dr. Eulenberg is a unique human being who gave of his time, his knowledge and his energy in order to help us make true the prophesy — and the speechless shall speak! □

# The pride and the promise behind every product

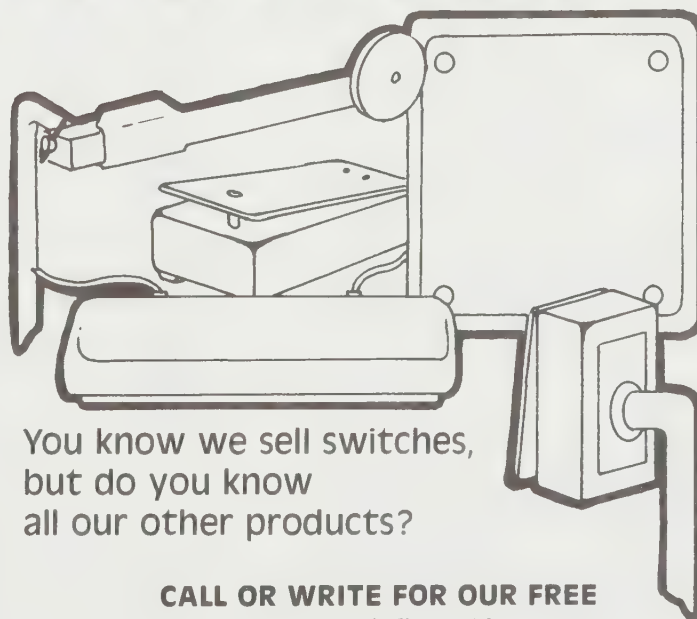
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## Animations of the Mind

FRANK DERUYTER

*Frank DeRuyter is the Director of Communication Disorders at Los Amigos Medical Center in California. He first became interested in augmentative communication while doing his Clinical Fellowship year with Dr. David Beukelman at the University of Washington. Dr. DeRuyter is conference chairman for the forthcoming ISAAC Conference. To bring readers up-to-date, we contacted Dr. DeRuyter through the modern technology of Confer, our computer conferencing system. Using this medium, we conducted a unique interview with Dr. DeRuyter.*

In 1981 I came to Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center, a 560 bed rehabilitation center, as Director of the Communication Disorders Department.

We utilize a team approach: speech-language, occupational therapy, physical therapy and rehabilitation engineering with consultation from other disciplines as necessary. I have a staff of thirty-seven speech pathologists, audiologists and support personnel.

My particular interest areas are the application of augmentative systems and theory to the adult neurogenic (brain injured) population. My concerns with the field relate to reimbursement of systems, the types of service delivery models we utilize and the need to change those.

My interest outside the field of augmentative communication is the administrative management of programs and how that relates to quality of care issues (productivity and its effect on outcome, risk management). Another major concern I have is how the augmentative area relates to the field of ethics. For example, how do ethics relate to the types of systems we recommend for various etiologies: the appropriateness, the considerations, and moral dilemmas?

### Planning is Underway

Recently my role as Conference chairman for ISAAC has taken more

and more of my time. Anticipation is growing for the conference, "Animations of the Mind", which will take place in Anaheim, California, in October. For those who don't already know, Anaheim is the home of Disneyland, an attraction that may well entice conference participants to linger on for an extra day or so.

The conference planning committee has been hard at work for many months now. In March, all members met with me at the Disneyland Hotel to finalize the program and check out the hotel and arrangements. Highlights of the program include six short courses examining in depth such topics as: developing the foundations of communicative competence, selecting graphics for communication boards, assessing and managing nonspeaking brain injured people, engineering for interactive symbolic communication, augmentative communication users on university campuses, and literacy issues in augmentative and alternative communication.

A series of thirty-six miniseminars will provide a forum for clinicians, consumers, educators, manufacturers, and researchers to discuss a broad range of topics including: artificial intelligence and expert systems in augmentative communication, intervention strategies for individuals with severe and profound disabilities, management of severe adult neurogenic disorders, vocabulary selection and retrieval strategies, vocational aspects of augmentative communication, technological developments, and issues of program administration and management.

### Consumers Are Welcome

Consumers will definitely be welcome at this ISAAC conference. In an effort to encourage as many consumers as possible to attend this year, ISAAC has set up six scholarships for nonspeaking individuals to be used toward expenses incurred in getting to California. As well, there will be a half-day forum that will provide the opportunity for consumers to share their ex-

periences and insights into the use of communication systems. Who better to tell the manufacturers of the problems encountered? There will be a volunteer partner program for consumers, and all consumers who pre-register will be sent additional information. Over seventy-five traditional platform presentations and poster sessions will cover topics such as clinical and teaching strategies, products, programs and procedures, technology and software, and research and publications. A series of video forums related to clinical, educational and research topics will also be presented.

Round table discussions have always been popular at ISAAC meetings and will again provide the opportunity for conference attendees to interact with the executive board of ISAAC. Other round table groups will discuss critical issues such as funding of services and equipment, and methods for updating clinical knowledge and skills with other professionals working in the field.

Individuals interested in establishing a USA chapter of ISAAC will have the opportunity to attend a USA-ISAAC kickoff forum.

In keeping with the tradition of the ISAAC conference, commercial exhibits will form an integral part of the program, providing the opportunity for participants to become acquainted with recent updates in technology for the augmentative communicator.

### A Time for Play As Well

No ISAAC meeting is complete without some social activities. This year the California hosts will endeavour to show the world some good old southern hospitality. Those attending the President's Reception at the Cardiff conference will remember the enthusiastic display of musical talent as offered by assorted national groups. This year will be no exception!

The 1988 President's Reception will be followed by an International "Talent Show" with entertainment by our own members, ending with



a gigantic ISAAC-88 Party. Any individual or group interested in joining or participating in the international group of talents (tap dancing, comedy, singing, anything!!!) will have three to five minutes to perform before distinguished ISAAC conference participants. Interested individuals should send their name and a brief description of their talent to the ISAAC-88 Conference Social Committee (see address below). There will be a specially catered luncheon one day with the presentation of the Prentke Romich AAC and other awards.

The Disneyland Hotel is designated as the "Official Hotel of the Magic Kingdom". It is situated on sixty acres of lush, tropical gardens in Anaheim. There are 1,174 guest rooms in three towers and garden villas, sixteen restaurants and bars, thirty-five shops, ten tennis courts, three pools and a sandy beach. The hotel is the only one linked to the Magic Kingdom via Disneyland monorail with loops in the park and the hotel. The hotel is very wheelchair accessible — no consumers need be deterred on this account.

No one can go to Disneyland without spending some time at the Magic Kingdom. The program has been structured to provide attendees with a free half-day on Monday afternoon to take advantage of the many and varied recreational and entertainment opportunities of Disneyland.

Other Southern California attractions worth visiting include Hollywood, Universal Studios and Movieland Wax Museum for film buffs, Knotts Berry Farm and of course the wonderful California beaches just twenty minutes from the hotel.

Conference participants are encouraged to pre-register on or before the August 20, 1988 deadline. Early registration will save money for participants and help the committee in planning. It will also ensure registrants of better accommodations. To facilitate early registration, forms will appear in the May ISAAC Bulletin and the June AAC.

American Airlines will be the official ISAAC conference air carrier, offering substantially reduced airfare rates. Members should quote Star File Number S-83072 to take advantage of these rates.

To check things out for himself,

Barry Romich from Ohio attended the March planning meeting and played the role of an augmentative communicator in a wheelchair. He wanted to evaluate the site from the consumer's perspective and to determine whether there were any problems the committee could anticipate. Everything went very smoothly, and Barry even managed to make arrangements for his ground transportation back to the airport using his Touch Talker and the telephone. It must have worked, as he made it back to Ohio safely.

#### Editor's Note:

For those with questions or who want to volunteer for the talent time, write to: ISAAC-88, P.O. Box 3753, Downey, California 90242 USA.

Those wishing to preregister should watch for the registration form in the ISAAC Bulletin, or contact Liz Baer, ISAAC Secretariat, P.O. Box 1762, Station R, Toronto, Ontario Canada M4G 4A3.

#### Occupational Therapy in Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Keila Waksvik is an occupational therapist with more than ten years in the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). She is preparing a monograph intended as a state-of-the-art review of current O.T. involvement in the field of augmentative and alternative communication.

Readers with any suggestions for input are asked to write to Ms. Waksvik as soon as possible. She is particularly interested in any references to relevant materials or procedures developed by O.T.'s or teams including an O.T., or items which should be included in an appendix.






The compilation of material is scheduled for completion by the end of June 1988, so time is of the essence. If you have any information to share please write to:  
Ms. Keila Waksvik,  
3544 De Bullion, Montreal,  
Quebec H2X 2Z9.



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## Augmentative Communication: Implementation Strategies

KATY MANN

*Katy Mann, a consultant with the Easter Seal Communication Institute is on a loan of services from the Toronto Board of Education. As a special education teacher she has ten years experience working with augmentative communicators at Bloorview School. She has particular interest in the area of literacy acquisition.*

### Coming Summer of '88!

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is about to publish a new book *Augmentative Communication: Implementation Strategies*. This text, presenting over ninety strategies by educators and clinicians to facilitate augmentative communication processes in the classroom, is the result of a two year project funded by the U.S. Department of Education and carried out under the direction of ASHA, as well as future needs and directions in the field of augmentative communication.

### Building Vocabulary

To introduce the new text, five of the strategies are briefly summarized in this article.

In "Using Topic Specific Mini-boards to Allow Individuals Who Use Augmentative Communication Aids to Initiate Communication with School Staff Members", Sally Cook (Los Angeles Unified School District, CA) outlines procedures for developing topic specific miniboards around special events and/or themes. Suggestions are provided for both message preparation using theme vocabulary and for facilitating interactive use of the miniboards with student peers and with staff.

This strategy describes how development of the miniboards can be a group learning experience in vocabulary selection and message preparation related to a specific topic. For example, the process may be used to create miniboards of dialogues

for student role playing of various interactive encounters likely to be experienced within activities of daily living.

Although the miniboards were created in group sessions, one of their strong features was the originality shown in the expression of individual messages.

Carol Goossens' and Sharon Crain (University of Alabama at Birmingham) in their strategy, "Establishing Multiple Communication Displays", discuss strategies for helping students to access a larger productive vocabulary set. The authors cite the need to provide a concentrated array of vocabulary that reflects the communication potential of a specific environment without increasing the motor requirements involved in selecting vocabulary items. Suggestions are provided for the construction and placement of multiple displays that may be used independently of each other, throughout the home or classroom. The storage and accommodation of displays supplemental to and used in conjunction with the student's core display are also discussed.

Related to the augmentative communicator's need for access to a vocabulary set that satisfies and enhances communication growth is the issue of providing access to literacy acquisition.

Carol G. Cohen (Syracuse, NY), in her strategy "Developing Writing Skills in the Classroom Through the Use of Word Processing", provides a brief introduction and overview to a hierarchy of instruction for the development of writing skills. Some suggestions for specific software programs related to age and developmental levels are provided.

A student-centered, language experience based approach to literacy acquisition that outlines a transitional process is presented in "Reading: From Blissymbols to Traditional Orthography" (Cathy Fairley, Nancy Lageer, Gwen Mann and Katy Mann, Toronto, Ontario). Three types of reading are described: the reading of Blissymbols, the reading of Blissymbols and words, and the reading of words alone (traditional orthography). The use of

these types of reading, although seen as a progression leading to traditional orthography, varies according to student level, and the context and difficulty of the reading material. Communication, comprehension and language competencies are seen as underlying literacy acquisition. The strategy outlines a general approach that is flexible in meeting the needs of students at varying levels while providing specific implementation suggestions for the three types of reading described.

### Developing Literacy Skills

Andrea Blau in "The Development of Literacy Skills for Severely Speech and Writing-Impaired Children" (New York, NY) presents a rationale for literacy instruction that involves both visual and phonological processes in developing reading and writing skills. The importance of incorporating the communication and language board as a first tool in developing literacy skills is emphasized. Blau suggests that instructors take advantage of the augmentative communicator's visual access to words and symbols on their communication boards. Program implementation covers four phases beginning with the provision of enjoyable, positive reading experiences and leading to sentence comprehension activities.

Blau suggests that "reading" communication boards be developed through a series of games and activities involving the fading of the symbol to the word representation. The strategy outlines and discusses the role of adapted curriculum texts and a variety of computer software, including programs with voice output, in providing both visual and phonetic learning experiences to facilitate literacy acquisition.

*Augmentative Communication: Implementation Strategies* provides readers with an opportunity to view and interact with a collection of ideas covering a wide range of topics, perspectives and approaches for facilitating augmentative communication in and beyond the educational setting.

Now that the suggestions have



been collected and will soon be available it is hoped that they will encourage discussion of an interdisciplinary nature related to augmentative communication practices in the classroom. □

#### Editor's Note:

For further information regarding *Augmentative Communication: Implementation Strategies* contact: Teresa Zimmer, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852 Telephone: (301) 897-5700.

### Join ISAAC Now

The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) offers four types of membership:

- Student Membership
- Active Membership
- Contributing Membership
- Corporate Membership

Members of ISAAC are entitled to reduced rates for: *Communicating Together*, *Communication Outlook*, *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* (AAC journal)

For membership application and other information about ISAAC write ISAAC, P.O. Box 1762, Station R, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4G 4A3.

## READERS WRITE

Mr. Geb Verburg  
c/o Communicating Together  
Easter Seal Communication Institute  
24 Ferrand Drive  
Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3N2

Dear Geb:

I have been meaning to write to you for some time now, to tell you how much I enjoy and appreciate your column "Research and Publications" in *Communicating Together*. In particular, your article "From Dreaming to Inventing the Future" struck me as being most timely and insightful. You bring a breadth and depth to the field that I find both important and provocative. I look forward to reading more.

Kind regards,  
Margaret McCuaig, Instructor  
Occupational Therapy Division  
The University of British Columbia

## COMMUNICATION OUTLOOK

### Focusing on Communication Aids and Techniques

A Publication of the International Society for

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC)

*Communication Outlook* is an international quarterly which provides a forum for individuals interested in the application of techniques and aids for people who experience communication handicaps. It is a cross-disciplinary information source as well as a reference for those wishing to contact others working in the field of communication enhancement.

*Communication Outlook* features regular sections on: commercially available aids, aids under development and components to build aids; interfacing and augmenting aids; new publications and resources; centers and groups involved in various aspects of communication enhancement; innovative methods, procedures, teaching strategies and uses of materials shared by readers; and advocacy issues, including new groups, strategies and successes.

For subscription information, contact *Communication Outlook*, Artificial Language Laboratory, 405 Computer Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1042, (517) 353-0870.

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# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## ESCI Special Interest Seminars

In Toronto, Ontario

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI) holds a series of seminars throughout the year on a variety of topics related to the application of augmentative communication.

- Blissymbolics Elementary Workshop, July 18-20 and August 22-24, 1988.
- Technology for Blissymbol Users, August 25, 1988.
- Programming for an Augmentative Communicator in the Class, August 26, 1988.
- Augmentative Communication for the Cognitively Impaired, November 10 and 11, 1988.
- Selecting Graphics for Communication Boards, December 1 and 2.
- Signing Exact English — for people who work with augmentative communicators. Six Monday evenings starting September 26, 1988.
- Augmentative Communication: a practical course for people who work with cognitively impaired individuals. Six Tuesday evenings starting November 1, 1988.

Contact: Training Coordinator, Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3N 3N2.  
Telephone: (416) 421-8377

## ICAART 88 Choice for All

In Montreal, Quebec

- June 25-30, 1988

The conference incorporates the 11th annual congress of RESNA.

Contact: ICAART, 3631 rue St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 3L6

## Southeast Augmentative Communication Ninth Annual Conference

In Birmingham, Alabama

- October 14-15, 1988

Guest Speaker: Ms. Carol Cohen  
Contact: Pamela Elder, Coordinator Southeast Augmentative Communication Conference, United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham, Inc., 2430 11th Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama 35234 USA.

## York University Faculty of Education, Summer Course in Alternative and Augmentative Communication

July 4-15, 1988

Designed to increase the educator's understanding of students who use augmentative communication systems, the course focuses on the nature of communication, augmentative communication within the language arts program, strategies in teaching/learning as they apply to a nonspeaking student and the special role of the classroom teacher in the total support team. The course topics offer opportunities for discussions relating to society's attitudes toward nonspeaking communicators, the benefits to be derived for teachers and classmates in having an augmentative communicator in the class, and the importance of family involvement in the educational program of nonspeaking students.

### Course Credits:

Special Education Elective 1/2 course credit.

Fees: \$166.95 (subject to increase), \$10 for course materials

### Location:

Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario.

For more information contact:  
Office of Student Programs, Faculty of Education, York University, North 801 Ross Bldg., 4700 Keele St., North York, Ontario M3J 1P3.  
Telephone: (416) 736-5001

## ISAAC 1988 Biennial Conference

In Anaheim, California

- October 23-26, 1988

Contact: Frank DeRuyter, PhD., Communication Disorders Dept., Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center, 7601 East Imperial Highway, Downey, California 90242 USA.

## Computer Resource Centre Colorado Easter Seal Society

In Georgetown, Colorado

- July 3-8, 1988, "A Hands-on Overview of Computers and Adaptive Equipment"

- July 10-15, 1988, "A Comprehensive Course on the Adaptive Firmware Card"

Contact: David Schmitt, Director, Computer Resource Center, Colorado Easter Seal Society, 5755 W. Alameda, Lakewood, Colorado 80226 USA.

Telephone: (303) 233-1666

## California State University, Northridge Fourth Annual Conference Computer Technology/Special Education/Rehabilitation

In Northridge, California

- November 2-4, 1988

Contact: Dr. Harry J. Murphy, California State University, Northridge, 1811 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, California 91330 USA.

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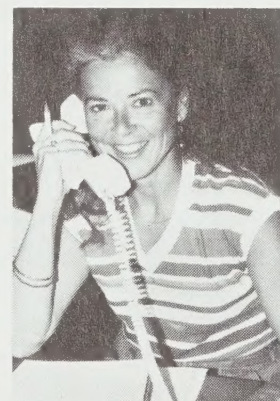
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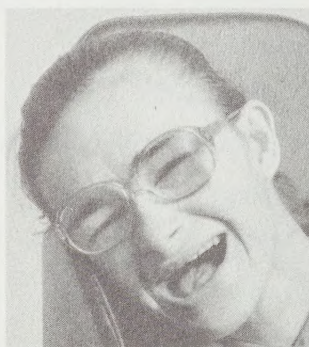
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This new film shows some of the many techniques people use to 'speak' or communicate their thoughts, needs and wishes. *Augmentative Communication* is the term used to describe the strategies and techniques used to augment speech.

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